



**MINUTES**  
**WISCONSIN INTEROPERABILITY COMMITTEE ON RADIO & TOWER SYSTEMS**

**Thursday, July 27<sup>th</sup>, 2006**

**10 a.m. – 3 p.m.**

Host: Marathon County Sheriff's Department

**Meeting Place: 212 River Drive**  
**Wausau, WI**

**Homeland Security Grant Program**

OJA identified 6 urban areas in the state for awarding grants. These areas don't just pertain to interoperability; they also pertain to HAZMAT as well as other jurisdictions. OJA chose the 6 WEM regions as their designation of the urban areas.

One neglected area of funding is the private sector. Forming public/private partnerships can be very beneficial for both parties, such as sharing of tower space.

**Mutual Aid Channel Update – Carl Guse**

Early in 2005 we put out a document, and in April of this year it was updated. To view the Mutual Aid Frequency document online, go to [www.siec.wi.gov](http://www.siec.wi.gov) and select *document library*. It is also available on the APCO website at <http://www.apcointl.org/frequency/siec/documents/documents.htm>

There were significant changes to EMS channels, now called EMS A, B & C. EMS C is now available for coordination. It can be used for medical helicopter landing if MARC 2 is in use. The "FIRECOM" name has been retired after 25 years, and is now Mutual Aid Box Alarm System FG Blue. Likewise WISTAC 1 is gone and is now IFERN. NATSAR (National Search & Rescue) has been added and was named by Jerry Thorpe.

The plan is to convert WISPERN to narrowband by 2011, and it is expected that other Mutual Aid channels will follow that timeline.

Jerry Thorpe from Shawano County and Vice President of NEWCOM spoke on the NEWCOM area "suggested" mutual aid frequency plan. Try to get everyone to put channels in the same positions on all radios. What this enables you to do is, if you are at a scene and not everyone has radios with display, if someone says go to MARC 1, it should be Channel 11 and everyone's would be the same. We hope to get everyone in the NEWCOM area programmed the same way.

In answer to a question, Carl Guse said that the numbers in the left column of the Mutual Aid Frequencies plan are not channel numbers, they are the recommended priority order. If an agency does not have enough room in a radio to put all the mutual aid channels, the highest priority channels would be included in the space available.

Jerry Thorpe mentioned that some fire departments have older radios. We want to get a core group of 7 channels programmed and get the people to use them and train the users.

Carl recommended taking the functions that fall under ICS and assigning channels for those functions. It's a good way to use the channels and to make ICS work. There is a preplan for segregating functions out beforehand. A draft is available and Carl can send it out to you; he is looking for feedback on it.

Marathon County - This weekend is K-9 training for search and rescue. What are the criteria for search and rescue to have access for the other frequencies?

Carl – They can operate under local authority. The recommendation for search and rescue teams is to interface with public safety agencies on the NATSAR channel.

Jerry Thorpe – Search and rescue groups are usually on a limited budget and may only have 4 channels; this could allow them to stay on their channel until narrowband comes along.

Jerry – Shawano County has a plan to assign the FireGround channels to the 16 fire departments in the county and the 4 in Menominee County. We set up with 12 miles apart between the areas so they won't interfere with one another. Carl is promoting the standard fire plan wherever he can in other counties. Jerry said the big thing is the main channels they are using are on the MABAS system. Encourage everyone to look at it and encourage your agencies to use it. It makes things simpler for everyone.

There will be a series of hearings on statewide legislation for the MABAS.

Steve Beil - Is this information also being shared with neighboring counties adjacent to the NEWCOM area? Yes; Carl has distributed this information out to a lot of places.

Jerry –Shawano County now has two different projects sharing resources with the state. Hopefully the DOT will be putting up a 350' tower in Bonduel on Shawano County land, and DNR is redoing lease and will be putting up a 400' tower.

Lunch

## **P25 Implementation – John Verhyen**

If radios are not fully P25 compliant, they will not qualify for Federal Grant money. Measurements would be repeatable and accurate and the testing laboratories must be accredited. Measurements must conform to TIA standards.

It's becoming almost mandatory to do an RFP when purchasing radios. That way you can list the TIA Standard sections and hold the vendor accountable to P25 compliance.

The program is voluntary. Manufacturers can still sell products without participating in the program, but P25 is mandatory if the radios are being purchased with federal dollars. You can call Eric Nelson, [enelson@its.bldrdoc.gov](mailto:enelson@its.bldrdoc.gov), (303) 497-4445 with questions.

## **NEWCOM – Sgt. Thorpe, Shawano County**

Sgt. Gerald Thorpe gave a presentation on the NEWCOM frequency plan. NEWCOM incorporates 16 counties in the northeast part of state and 500 public safety agencies.

Gale Sorum – The State Interoperability Executive Council (SIEC) was formed by the Governor in 2005 and fifteen people were appointed to it. The SIEC approved for comment two documents for improving communications. One is the Technical Plan to Support Statewide Interoperability and the second one is the Functional Specifications for a Proposed Wisconsin Public Safety Communications System. Three listening sessions will be held:

- July 31 – Stevens Point
- August 1 – Eau Claire
- August 3 – Waukesha

Locations and times are available on the web site. You can also submit comments until September 1 via e-mail. See the SIEC web site for more information. [www.siec.wi.gov](http://www.siec.wi.gov) "Compatibility" definitions can also be found on that web site that compare compatible, compliant, upgradeable, fully compliant, etc.

## **OJA funding for 2005**

Funding was granted to have 6500 radios reprogrammed and 3600 radios replaced. It also helped move people off MARC frequencies that were going to be used statewide. Auditors will be looking to make sure training was provided on the new/reprogrammed radios.

Lynn Boening - What criteria will auditors use to prove training? Gale wasn't sure.

Bill Dean – People need to train for and know ICS (Incident Command System) to make interoperability work. Will NIMS (National Incident Management System) training also be attached to grant approvals?

John Verhyen – I am not sure but I think that if training brings along audits there is going to be some control mechanism.

Bill Dean – Was money set aside for training? Gale – It was a separate line item, you had to ask for training money in your grant submittal. In September, OJA will do another round of funding for short-term planning, getting mutual aid equipment.

Bill Dean – If people realize they need training, will that come out of the second round of funding? Gale – Yes.

## **Discussion Period**

Mike Knoll, Pierce County– What is the status of the State Mobile Data Computer System? What will it be capable of in the near future? John Verhyen said that it is status quo until the state starts implementing OC3 microwave, new compacting techniques are developed or the system moves to 700/800 in the future.

The Statewide system mobile data system is very costly. If there is grant money available this year or next, we will need it to purchase a frequency plan.

Bill Dean, Communication Planning Consultants – We are working with Pierce County and West Central regional group, which consists of 10 counties and an Indian tribe. We are working on developing a training program geared to meet the audit requirements of these grant programs. One of the training programs will be for supervisors and dispatchers and is geared toward leadership. We will also be offering user training for people in the field. After we have beta tested our program, we will be offering it at a modest price so it will be accessible for anyone that needs to conform to the audit requirements.

NEWCOM received \$650,000 for MARC repeaters and portables. They purchased a MARC repeater for every county and dispatch center. They purchased everything including antennas, line and duplexers as a group, saved money and ended up sending \$100,000 back.

Is there work between NEWCOM and FoxCom on joint efforts?

Jerry Thorpe - we did talk to others.

Although Marathon County is part of NEWCOM, it is also tied in with dispatch to the FOXCOM group. State Patrol also.

Ehlert - Agencies working with the Elert console interconnect project only wanted the companies they have working on their consoles to install the console connections. This created some delays. If pilot project works, the project could be rolled out statewide.

Randy Pickering, Dane County Fire Chiefs Assoc - Dane County has put together a technical committee. We are in the process of planning a P25 narrowband infrastructure for about 7500

radios, all public safety & service agencies in Dane County. We are working with plans put together by the SIEC. We will probably put in the infrastructure in 2008; we are afraid the state won't be ready when we are ready to go. We communicate with prisons, US Marshall, FBI, cities, counties and State Patrol on a day-to-day basis. We are serious about a system that allows seamless communications between users.

Randy - We have narrowed the system choices down to three. We have not chosen a frequency band. We just issued the contract to do our frequency study. We would like it if the State could build the common infrastructure. We need 100% in-building coverage on our tactical channels. We are looking at doing this system with private partners (utilities). We need 17 towers to cover the entire county.

John got a call from EADS, a vendor involved with P25 standards; they will be demonstrating the ISSI interface at the National APCO convention in August.

Jerry Thorpe – We were forming NEWCOM before funding ever came about. We go back several years. A lot of counties were putting in systems, so we decided to get talking and share resources.

Al Wisler -, Marathon County– What will be the outcome of the frequency plan, will it give you the frequencies you need?

John – It will give us a working plan for the state of Wisconsin. And how it's going to affect things in the next region/border. We are trying to garnish frequencies. A lot will determine how that frequency plan comes out and the amount of sharing of frequencies the local agencies are willing to do as a trunking system would be implemented. The State Patrol has spent thousands and thousands of dollars purchasing frequencies for the mobile data operations.

Adjourn.